**TRESTLE BOARD**

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Description automatically generated February 2025**

**Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520**

**2244 Westwood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90064**

**(424 273-1054) / https://www.ioniccomposite.com**

Dear Brethren,

This past month has, to put it mildly, been difficult for everyone here in the Los Angeles area. The historic fires that devasted large swathes of the greater Los Angeles community have created countless scenes of horror, loss, and grief, and while the fires are finally largely contained as of the time of my writing this message, much work remains to be done before the true full extent of the damage will even be revealed. There are a whole new set of oncoming challenges that await us all as we join together in coping with the impact these fires have had and will continue to have on our city and community.

Dark times like these truly highlight the extremes of people’s character. We saw the lowest of the low in those who attempted to pass themselves off as first responders in order to loot the remains of homes in the fire-affected areas. Looters targeted not only the burned mansions of the wealthy (which is itself despicable in every way), but also the tiny homes of those who truly lost *everything*, and who likely have little if any form of safety net or backup resources to draw from going forward. Looting of any kind is horrifying and disgusting, but to me at least, somehow, looting from the those who already had so little to begin with seems like having hit rock bottom only to proceed to dig down further. On the other hand, however, we have seen countless individuals and groups who have rallied to give selflessly and generously to all those impacted. Churches, Synagogues, food pantries, supermarkets, retail stores of all kinds, and volunteer organizations all stepped up in various ways to try to lighten the burden on those directly impacted, help ensure people were taken care of in the short term and are actively continuing to help see to it that long term support is set up and provided for.

Los Angeles is truly the City of Angels, and while there may be a few who fail to live up to that standard scattered among us, these past weeks have truly highlighted the overall goodness of our communities and the people in them. While there have certainly been those whose actions do not deserve respect or admiration during this past month, it can be easy to become focused only on the negative. Instead, I think we would all be better served to note that for every scam artist, rapacious landlord, unscrupulous real estate buyer, and looter that has tried to take advantage of the situation, there have been literally *hundreds* or even *thousands* of selfless donors and volunteers trying to help.

If there was ever a time for the core Masonic tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth to shine brightly, this is that time, and our city and our fraternity has, I am proud to say, risen to that challenge and answered that calling. Grand Lodge has opened up the Distressed Worthy Brother Relief fund, which is administered by the Masonic Homes of California, to help those directly impacted, and resources of all kinds, from housing to food to clothing to educational, medical, and even psychological assistance is being provided to those who need it. To help in that effort, and in response to a request from Grand Lodge for our Lodge’s assistance, I have asked that our Senior Warden make a motion at this coming Stated Meeting for a large donation on the part of the Lodge to that fund. I also encourage all individual brothers who have the means to do so to likewise contribute in whatever way and to whatever extent they feel they can reasonably do so, be it to that or another worthy fundraising or charitable relief effort.

By the same token, I wish to reiterate the message I previously sent out in a separate email blast, and remind any brother who was personally and directly impacted by these fires to reach out to us or to Grand Lodge for assistance. No one needs to face these trials alone. We are here to help.

I wish all of our community the strength, endurance, and patience that these difficult times demand. I hope to see you in Lodge. Our doors are *always* open to Brothers in need.

Fraternally,

Jacob Gershbock, PM

Master

**February Calendar**

**Monday, February 3, 7:15 pm: Stated Meeting**

**Menu**: Romaine Green Salad-V

Chicken Marsala-Note: A limited number of plain chicken breasts available by request

Rice Pilaf-V

Garlic Bread

Asparagus-V

Tiramisu

Use the link below to RSVP:

<https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/stated-meeting-2/stated-meeting-rsvp/>

**Monday, February 10, 7:15pm: First Degree Practice**

All Officers Required To Attend

Entered Apprentices and sideliners welcome

**Monday, February 17: Lodge Dark**

Lodge Dark in observance of Presidents Day

**Monday, February 24, 7:15pm: First Degree Conferral**

Come support our newest brother and help welcome him to the fraternity

Light refreshments following the degree

<https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/upcoming-events/non-stated-meeting-rsvp-form/>

**Wednesday, February 26, 7:00pm: OSI**

Liberal Arts hosting

All Officers **REQUIRED** to attend without prior approval of **BOTH** the Master and the Inspector

**March Calendar**

**Monday, March 3, 7:15pm: Stated Meeting**

**Menu:** Mediterranean Braised Lamb Shoulder

Rice Pilaf**-V**

Hummus and Lavash**-V**

Baklava

**Use the link below to RSVP:**

[**https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/stated-meeting-2/stated-meeting-rsvp/**](https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/stated-meeting-2/stated-meeting-rsvp/)

**Monday, March 10, 7:15pm: Masonic Education Night**

Join us as we kick off our quarterly speaker series with a lecture from

Worshipful Nicholas Mitchell

Light Refreshments will be served

Open to Masons of all degrees **only**

Please use the link below to RSVP for headcount:

<https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/upcoming-events/non-stated-meeting-rsvp-form/>

**Monday, March 17, 7:15pm: Third Degree Practice**

All Officers Required to Attend

Master Masons Welcome

**Thursday, March 20, 7:00pm: OSI**

**Anchor Bell hosting at Culver City Foshay Lodge**

All Officers **REQUIRED** to attend without prior approval of **BOTH** the Master and the Inspector

**Monday, March 24,: TBD**

**Monday, March 31, 7:15pm: Hold For Third Degree**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Save the Date!

**2025 Masonic Speaker Series Kickoff!**

Join us on March 10, 2025, as Worshipful Nicholas Mitchell delivers the first of our quarterly Masonic talks with a look at the significance of the number 15 in Masonry and Masonic History.

Masons of all Degrees welcome to attend.

Light Refreshments will be served. RSVP using the link below:

<https://www.ioniccomposite.com/lodge-events/upcoming-events/non-stated-meeting-rsvp-form/>

**Think About It – Ron Koretz, P.M.**

**Think About It**

By most accounts, the state of California is in debt. When I tried to find what the size of that debt was, I found estimates ranging from $2 billion (albeit that was just an estimate of the debt for next year) to over $1 trillion (which included unfunded future liabilities). It seems to me that, when one is in debt, the logical approach would be to find ways to spend less money. Apparently California politicians do not view the world this way.

            Recently Governor Newsom released a plan to create high paying jobs for people without college degrees, his “Master Plan for Career Education”. Under the provisions of this plan, people will receive college credit (usually at a community college level) for a variety of work experiences, including military service. Individuals will be able to create Learning and Employment Records that document knowledge and skills that they have already mastered (although many already have such documentation, called job resumes). Existent or planned apprenticeships will be available for about 500,000 Californians to develop particular skills by 2029; the state invested over $200 million in this project last year.

            Perhaps the most controversial (at least to my mind) step is that California removed the requirements for college degrees or other educational accomplishments for almost 30,000 state jobs and plans to double the number in 2025 (assuming that various state labor unions agree). According to the governor’s statement, these requirements were “unnecessary barriers to public service jobs”. (It was not clear why unnecessary requirements existed in the first place.)

            While the plan may have good intentions, it will add millions of dollars to an already overwhelmed state budget. Furthermore, while California may be able to manipulate job requirements for their own employees, it is not clear how and why private businesses would choose to change their practices. (Private companies probably have good reasons to require certain qualifications for the jobs for which they pay.) Reducing requirements will make more people eligible and, if the intent is to create more opportunities for the less-qualified, the state may even preferentially employ them. Thus, the more qualified will be less able to find such employment. Are we seeing merit being sacrificed to the demands of equity? Remember that these civil servants will be the people that you and I will have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, we all will likely be asked to pay higher taxes to sustain the system.

            Interestingly, Governor Newsom was accompanied by a Republican Assemblywoman at the news conference. This “bipartisan” support makes me wonder even more how (or even if) politicians think.

            Think about it.

**HOW TO GET YOUR DUES CARD**

With the installation of the iMember 2.0 online system a few years ago that all brothers can access upon registration, lodge secretaries no longer receive all the dues cards to mail out after payment.

The dues card is now online and can be printed or downloaded in an 8 ½ x 11 format which can be printed or downloaded to a phone.

There are 2 ways to get you dues card:

1. Login to www.member.freemason.org, select Imposite Lodge bar, then select Virtual Card.

2. Send an email to our lodge Secretary Mike Bear PM (michael.bear@mac.com) requesting that it be mailed to you.

If you need help registering for iMember contact the Secretary.

BRETHREN BEWARE

of scam / phishing emails asking for money or personal information.

Scammers are pretending to be Masons, even the Worshipful Master!

We’ll never ask you to send money or gift cards via email.

Reach out to Lodge Leadership directly or by phone.

From the Secretary

Brethren

This being the start of a new year, I want to remind you that your 2025 lodge dues are due to the lodge. By now you have received several mailings reminding you of this and how to pay them.

If you have any questions about this or, if you have any situation whereby you would have difficulties in paying them, ***please*** contact me and we can discuss the options you may have. Being a member of this lodge and Freemasonry has many benefits even if you are unable to attend lodge meetings.

To those of you who have not been advancing in your degree proficiencies, ***please*** contact me and I will find someone to work with you, I know that it may have been a long time since you took your degrees, again, together we can get you back of the road of becoming a Master Mason!

If you have any changes to your contact information, **please** contact me, or make your changes on your iMember page. If you are not on iMember, you guessed it, contact me and I will help you create your account.

Lastly, if you have ideas for programs, activities, speaker topics, or things you would like to see your lodge get involved with, contact the Master or me. We want your input. This is your lodge!

Fraternally yours and best wishes to you and your family and friends for a great 2025.

Michael Bear, P.M.

Secretary

[michael.bear@mac.com](mailto:michael.bear@mac.com)

C: 310-962-4346

**Called From Labor**

Since the last publication, the following Brothers have laid down their working tools and passed to that undiscovered country from whose borne no traveler returns:

Sol Marco, PM

Mark Mishel

“Soft and Safe to thee, my Brothers, be thy resting place.”

**February Birthdays**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Birthday** |
| Ariel | Afar | 10 |
| Karam | Al Yateem | 28 |
| Robert | Feiles | 28 |
| Bruce | Gary | 14 |
| Amir | Jandaghi | 14 |
| Joshua | Jason | 11 |
| Roberto | Jo | 7 |
| Joseph | Michael | 5 |
| Tony | Napoli | 21 |
| Victor | Pinkerton | 22 |
| Robert | Rosenstein | 26 |
| Stanley | Sax | 14 |
| Richard | Shapiro | 3 |
| Robin | Silverman | 17 |
| Ira | Steinore | 29 |
| Benson | Turner | 12 |
| Norman | Weinstock | 15 |
| Chay | Wright | 17 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2025 OFFICERS | Master – Jacob Gershbock | Marshal – \* |
| Senior Warden – Jeffrey Bear, P.M. (Trisha) | Senior Steward – Kerin Surents, P.M. (Suzanna) |
| Junior Warden – Steve Resnick, P.M. (Sheelah) | Junior Steward – Michael Mosbach |
| Senior Deacon – Chay Alexander Wright, P.M  (Virian) | Inspector for the 626th Masonic District:  Gevork Asatryan P.M. |
| Junior Deacon – Luis Tananta (Maria) | Trestleboard Layout – Cody Blair |
| Treasurer – Bernie Morse, P.M. (Carolyn) | Piano – |
| Secretary – Michael Bear, P.M. (Debbie) | Tiler – Roy Steinfeld, P.M. |
| Assistant Secretary - \* |  |